



West Nile Virus (WNV)

Fact Sheet



West Nile virus (WNV) spreads mostly through the bite of an infected mosquito. WNV can also spread through blood transfusions, organ transplants, breastfeeding, and from mother to baby during pregnancy.



Anyone can get WNV, but people who spend more outdoors are at the highest risk. WNV can also infect horses, birds, and other animals.

Signs and Symptoms



Fever and Chills



Weakness



Headache



Body and Muscle Pain



Inflammation of the Brain



Confusion



Neck Stiffness



Coma

Most people infected with WNV will not show any signs of illness. Few people infected with WNV show mild signs and symptoms, which usually start 2 to 12 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. This includes fever, head and body aches, weakness, and vomiting. Most people that show mild signs and symptoms recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months.

Rarely people infected with WNV develop a severe illness affecting the brain and surrounding area. Signs and symptoms include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, confusion, coma, and paralysis. Severe illness can occur at any age, however people over 60 years of age have the highest risk. People with certain medical conditions are also at greater risk. A small number of cases with severe illness die.